[For additional information on rhetorical style and the use of gestures in counting coup, see Category 555.]

5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

The children, at least the boys, played about and did as they pleased. Not so with the girls. Their duties began at a very early age. They carried wood and water for their mothers, sewed moccasins, and as soon as they were strong enough, were taught to tan robes and furs, make lodges, travois, and do all other woman's — and so menial — work. The boys played at mimic warfare, hunted around in the brush with their bows and arrows, made mud images of animals, and in summer spent about half their time in the water. In winter, they spun tops on the ice, slid down hill on a contrivance made of buffalo ribs, and hunted rabbits.

Shortly after noon, the hunters began to return, bringing in deer, antelope, buffalo, elk, occasionally bear, and, sometimes, beaver which they had trapped. The camp began to be more lively. In all directions persons could be heard shouting out invitations to feasts. Here a man was lying back on his couch singing and drumming; there a group of young men were holding a war dance; everywhere the people were eating, singing, talking, and joking. As the light faded from the western sky and darkness spread over the camp, the noise and laughter increased. In many lodges, the people held social dances, the women, dressed in their best gowns, ranged on one side, the men on the other; all sung, and three or four drummers furnished an accompaniment; the music was lively if somewhat jerky. At intervals the people rose and danced, the "step" being a bending of the knees and swinging of the body, the women holding their arms and hands in various graceful positions.

With the night came the rehearsal of the wondrous doings of the gods. These tales may not be told in the daytime. Old Man would not like that, and would cause any one who narrated them while it was light to become blind. All Indians are natural orators, but some far exceed others in their powers of expression. Their attitudes, gestures, and signs are so suggestive that they alone would enable one to

5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
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105 understand the stories they relate. I have seen these story-
512 tellers so much in earnest, so entirely carried away by the
537 tale they were relating, that they fairly trembled with ex-
538 citement. They held their little audiences spell-bound. The women dropped their half-sewn moccasin from their listless hands, and the men let the pipe go out. These stories for the most part were about the ancient gods and their miraculous doings. They were generally related by the old men, warriors who had seen their best days. Many of them are recorded in this book. They are the explanations of the phenomena of life, and contain many a moral for the instruction of youth.

535 The *I-kŭn-ŭh'-kah-tsi* contributed not a little to the enter-
575 tainment of every-day life. Frequent dances were held by the different bands of the society, and the whole camp always turned out to see them. The animal-head masks, brightly painted bodies, and queer performances were dear to the Indian heart.

484 Such was the every-day life of the Blackfeet in the buffalo
492 days. When the camp moved, the women packed up their possessions, tore down the lodges, and loaded everything on the backs of the ponies or on the travois. Meantime the chiefs had started on, and the soldiers — the Brave band of the *I-kun-uh'-kah-tsi* — followed after them. After these leaders had gone a short distance, a halt was made to allow the column to close up. The women, children, horses, and dogs of the camp marched in a disorderly, straggling fashion, often strung out in a line a mile or two long. Many of the men rode at a considerable distance ahead, and on each side of the marching column, hunting for any game that might be found, or looking over the country for signs of enemies.

484 Before the Blackfeet obtained horses in the very first
175 years of the present century, and when their only beasts of
492 burden were dogs, their possessions were transported by these animals or on men's backs. We may imagine that in
482 those days the journeys made were short ones, the camp travelling but a few miles.

6: McFee E-4,5 (1959-1967) 1972 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

monies in which visiting dignitaries were given an Indian name and adopted, symbolically, into the Blackfeet tribe. If any family conducted a memorial service for a deceased relative, or staged a give-away to honor visitors, he was called upon to be the crier. As crier he announced the import of the ceremony, led in chanting the proper song, or cried out the occasion for the give-away and called out the names of those to be honored with a gift.

In years past he had been employed by the Great Northern Railway as an official greeter of tourists arriving by train at Glacier Park, and as an entertainer at the inns within the Park where he and his friends staged Indian dances for the tourists.

Buffalo Heart, with others of his peers, had a place on the Honorary Tribal Council, and was given a small per diem for attendance at tribal council meetings. He was often chosen to accompany council members on trips to Washington, D.C. for the purpose of lobbying for or against proposed legislation which would affect Indians. In his regalia he furnished a bit of Indian color, as well as advice, to the proceedings.

Buffalo Heart and his fellow members of the Honorary Council felt that they represented the voice of the full-blood portion of the tribe and took every occasion to make long speeches in Blackfeet, urging harmony and trust, and asking for more attention to the needs of the people. But people paid little attention to the speeches; instead they talked, moved about, and impatiently filled in time until the Honorary Councilmen had had their say. On several occasions councilmen told the interpreter: "Tell him to make it short." The people in general felt some pride in their old-timers, but mixed this with a feeling of impatience and bare tolerance when the chiefs seemed to be taking themselves too seriously.

Buffalo Heart, and the others like him, usually lived among clusters of full-bloods in the more run-down areas of town, in small outlying communities, or, in a few cases, in more remote areas of the reservation. Buffalo Heart lived in a small two-room shack on Moccasin Flat, an area of shacks and cabins without sewer or water service, on the edge of Browning. The houses immediately surrounding his were occupied by some of his kin—a married son and his family, two married daughters and their families, and the family group of his brother.

The old man's home was the center for Indian gatherings. Here he and his friends conducted the religious rituals, bundle openings, and other ceremonies they wished to celebrate. Those who were singers would gather here occasionally for a song service—a meeting where they would drum and sing old and new songs. Buffalo Heart served as a tie to the old days, a source of information on lore and ritual, and an available medicine man for those who wished an Indian cure. The younger members of his family might participate in these functions, but usually just watched with a respectful air. As one family member said: "You join in even if you don't believe—it's part of the old Indian ways."

Buffalo Heart, however, was more than a man of the past. He was a medicine man and conducted curing ceremonies, yet he and those whom he had cured more often availed themselves of the services of the local doctors and hospital. Buffalo Heart was known as a Catholic and attended church occasionally, yet he was also considered to be a repository for, and a leader in, the present-day

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 4]

6: McFee E-4,5 (1959-1967) 1972 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

571 643 out when meetings are held to vote on per capita payments, or decisions about the use of Indian land are being considered. At such meetings people of both orientations[A] are present and are equally vocal in support of or in opposition to proposals made. Both orientation groups are represented in the council. At meetings I attended, one or two old timers used the time prior to the opening of the meeting to make speeches, loudly haranguing the usually inattentive audience about the problems of the full-bloods. Council minutes frequently record the speeches of the Honorary Councilmen, who contribute to the debate, such as the translation of a speech recorded several years back in which an honored elder spoke about procedures in preparing a land claim case against the U.S. government:

> I am speaking to all of you my people. We have the time and we have the chance to discuss the true evidence that we have and we should use them for our discussions. Don't use things that will puzzle up our claims. Use the facts to determine your progress. In my memory there was a time when a claim matter came up and several members of the tribe tried to use evidence that was not right. I told them to bring out only the true facts and if they were presented with our faith in them we would be sure to win our case. I believe that if we proceed according to treaties and agreements made with the government we will make some progress on our claims. Let's work with the chosen leaders of our tribe. I'm sure they are doing the best they can for us . . . (Unpublished documents of the Blackfeet Tribal Council).

666 Campaign meetings are held in Browning and the outlying communities preceding each biennial election of tribal councilmen. As many as sixty-five to seventy candidates run for office, and most of them attend these meetings to explain their stands on political issues, and to solicit voter support at the polls. 666 Most of the meetings I attended in Browning took place in a centrally located 571 building where the attendance was mixed. The orientation differences were recognized, however, by arranging other meetings at the homes of some of the "full-bloods" where Indian-oriented people were most numerous of those attending. Attendance at meetings in the outlying communities is proportionate to the composition of the community population; that is, Starr School and Heart Butte have a larger proportion of Indian-oriented present than at similar meetings at Babb or East Glacier where the population is more balanced or even largely white-oriented.

The political meetings draw interested people from both segments of the 666 reservation population because the issues discussed affect the affairs of all. All candidates at meetings I attended made some allusion to their own Indian identification, that is, "we Indians," "the white man is after our land and we Indians must prevent this." Speeches emphasized the need to stop white encroachment, the imminence and dangers of termination, the need to preserve the land base. Calls were made for better education, more jobs, more per capita payments and better 666 management of tribal funds. Some candidates spoke in English, others in Black-191 feet, and the speeches of both were translated into the other language by an interpreter. I was impressed by the fairness of the interpretation. Often the translator was a candidate himself, yet he translated objectively the remarks of the other speakers, occasionally turned a haltingly given speech into a forceful and

A [i.e., White vs. Indian-orientation--Analyst]

Powers took it up to the top of the Center Pole, where the ropes were fastened, and then up to Sun, who was looking down on the ceremony. 796 785

The remainder of that day was taken up with ceremonies that helped the People learn some of the history of their tribe. Men came forward who had personal exploits, mainly war adventures, to their record, and proceeded to tell their stories, giving a demonstration of the main scenes. Wilson for some reason calls these men dancers. 796 536 537 555

The dancers, one at a time, now related their heroic deeds in a theatrical manner, during which they would go through all sorts of antics in imitations of the original event. Some built little lodges on the ground and alongside were placed two or three little boys, who represented so many picketed horses, and led them away or else made a bold dash and captured them that way. In other cases, the boaster would enlist the services of some of the other dancers and would divide them into two parties, one representing the enemy, the other his own. The squad, acting as the enemy, would stoop low behind an imaginary shelter and watch the others approach the horses to be stolen. When the horse-thieves were almost upon their prey, the others would suddenly jump in sight and fire off their guns in the air, then a sham battle would ensue during the cause of which one or more of the participators would fall as dead, and undergo the operation of scalping, and in some cases have both hands cut off, showing how the killed had been used in the fight long ago. Each man who entered the O-Kon as a member of a dancing party related his deeds of valor during which his relatives brought in goods and presented them to the sacred gathering. The people present took more than a usual interest in certain of these rehearsals which were those of events in tribal history dear to the memory of all. This pride was, of course, more noticeable during the narratives of the older men. A comical feature of these performances appeared in their manner of

showing mounted men as distinct from those who had fought on foot. The former would thrust a stick between his legs with the end trailing on the ground and ride it about the arena exactly like we used to in our boyhood. This absurd pantomime was performed numbers of times by middle-aged Indians who in their ordinary life were most circumspect in matters of behaviour. Several hours were spent thus, until the last warrior had related his glorious deeds. Much ammunition was shot off and all kinds of trophies were captured from bogus enemies. Each here began his story by mounting a horse and riding it around the inside of the sacred lodge, singing his war song and shouting. He would then dismount, hand the horse to someone outside, and enter upon the details of his past.

796 536 537 555

Thus ended the second day of activities inside of the Medicine Lodge. The Crazy Dogs and the Black Soldiers, both leading societies of brave warriors, have always had a great many exploits to relate during the Medicine Lodge ceremonies. Two more societies were to tell and perform their stories during the next several days. Meanwhile, the camp was silent again.

[575]

On the next day, Sunday, no one entered the structure until late, 4 or 5 o'clock in the evening [the Weather Dancers were inside, of course]; [then entered] the principal heroes in the society called "Crow Carriers." Their performances were much like the former, and one used a wagon to illustrate how he had killed some Cree he found travelling in a cart. This exploit could not be acted inside the O-Kon, so he and those who assisted him went outside to the front or East and performed the first part of the tragedy, which ended after a retreat inside the sacred lodge. In this case the boaster took by main force a gun from the hands of a living foe and afterwards slew him with a knife. A man, Sum-a-ke, appeared in the torture paint and, after sitting on the ground

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33: Bradley G-3 (1871-1877) 1923
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

796 their places in the dance. As may be supposed the dancers
535 are worn completely out by the close of the ceremony. The movements of the dancers keep time with the beating of a drum accompanied by a monotonous chant which a group of old men seated nearby on the ground keep up con-
[534] tinually. The drum used is of rawhide, stretched over a
[237] wooden hoop, similar in shape and somewhat larger than a tambourine. It is beaten with a single stick, the pounding end being wrapped with dressed skin or other suitable material.

796 During the dance the warriors who have achieved suc-
555 cess in war during the previous year enter the lodge to
[782] count their *coups* and anyone desiring to make a sacrifice to the sun does so by hanging his offering upon the pole. *Coup* is the French word meaning *blow,* and has come to be the accepted translation of the Blackfoot *nah-mach-kach,* a word difficult to find an exact equivalent for but being nearly "a trophy taken" (Major Culbertson's translation), its root being *nah-mall,* a weapon or military arm. The various exploits of war are denominated coups and reflect honor upon their performers according to a certain fixed scale of merit. To capture an enemy's arms is a coup of the first class; to touch him alive, of the second; to touch his dead body or secure his scalp, of the third; to make a successful theft of an enemy's horses, of the
[431] fourth. Those who desire the privilege of recounting their
[537] coups must first present a horse to someone at the door of the medicine lodge (an irrevocable gift), when he may enter the lodge and in his turn relate his exploits, illustrating them by gestures indicating the manner of their performance.

The horse stealers, however, are not required to make the gift of a horse at the door but bring with them a bundle of sticks, and, casting one into a fire kept burning in the lodge, say: "At such a time I stole so many horses at such a place, from such enemies." Then casting in another
796 stick describes another occasion. Such are the ceremonies
[782] accompanying the sun dance, and when they are concluded all hands break camp and move away, leaving the lodge

122 any of the boys participating. The girls—those little hams—were
[524] fighting to have movies made of themselves, but the boys, quite
[126] typically, were quick to run away. The boy with the three long
[302] braids was there, but I could not get a good shot of him. Jim says that the boy's name is Door or Dore (sp?), and that his mother rinses his lustrous long hair in tea.

122 After I had picked up Jim and the Chief, we drove out to the
126 Museum of the Plains Indian, on the "skirt" of town, as Jim says. Outside the museum building there is an Indian version of Grauman's Chinese Theatre; many years ago the great chiefs of the Plains Tribes had their footprints recorded there in bronze. The Chief is the only one of these great chiefs still living, and I had a very strange feeling of anachronism—as though both the Chief and I belonged to a different period of history—as I took a photo of the Chief standing next to the footprints that he had made so long ago.

These cameras of mine are turning me into a genuine tourist, but thus far, at least, I have not begun to take pictures of *myself*.

122 We left the museum and went back in town and stopped at the
657 Agency, where the Chief was supposed to pick up his commodities.
622 I waited outside in the wagon, and pretty soon came the Chief, minus rations but bursting with a fiercely contained dignity. Nobody
[262] said word one, and in silence we drove back to the ranch and had a good lunch of porkchops (pig is *ák-sin-nee*, meaning "they grunt"), boiled potatoes, canned peas, bread and strawberry jam, and hot tea.

122 The Chief ate well, but in silence, and it was not until he had
537 seated himself in his chair in the living-room and leisurely finished
657 smoking a post-prandial cigar that he beckoned Jim and me close
622 and launched into the fiery and truly magnificent oratory for which he has so long been famous. He sat very straight and tall, his fine, orbicular head held high. And as the thunderous old voice rumbled, and the huge old hands sculptured power and beauty in the air, the oscillatory motion of the great brown jaw added a synchronal measure of authority to the old fellow's declarations.

The Chief was speaking rapidly, and he was using oratorical forms—not the simple phrases which he and Jim thoughtfully employ in addressing me—and I could not follow the discourse. A Blackfoot word which I knew to mean *card* or *ticket* was repeated several times, and during a pause for translation Jim explained that in this case the word was being used to refer to a ration card. The Chief had forgotten to take his ration card to town today, and the Agency had refused to issue him his commodities without it, and

the Old-timer had told them that he was still chief around here and that he wasn't about to osculate anybody's posterior for a few groceries and that if they wouldn't issue him his commodities without a silly piece of paper then they could take their commodities and stuff 'em. Instead of using the term *ist-tćst-tin-ope:* ration card, or referring to *ni-moch-tèst-tin-àhp-pey:* my ration card, the Chief had showed his contempt for the situation by employing the word *gah-tsáh-tsis* which is usually reserved as a reference to playing cards or, infrequently, a colloquial reference to theatre tickets. 122 537 657 622

The Chief is really one of the great inspirations of my life. I find back-scratching ecstasy in the knowledge that even today, in the midst of a society which has so aptly been termed "effete and pusillanimous," this gentle, fearless old Indian chief still has the groin to tell the Federal Government where to go. Chief James White Calf of the Piegan Blackfoots will give you his love and his possessions and his life with an open heart, but all the money in the world could not buy a single hair from his stubborn old braids. Pride. Real pride! There is so damn little of it to be found. 122 622 657 157

It is really a tear-jerking realization that the Chief is almost the last survivor of a culture that will soon be gone completely. Even Jim is tossed in the tempest of this dying culture. Jim is an Indian through and through—and I could pay him no higher compliment—but he is faced with the problem of earning a decent living, and in order to do so he must either play a role of dumb Indian or become an Imitation White Man, neither of which roles suits Jimmy at all. 182 178

Because of the fact that there is so much unemployment among Indians—there simply is not enough work available—wide currency is given to the fiction that Indians are lazy bums. This burns me! Aside from the small number of street-corner loafers—and every culture and every community has its share of these—most of the Indians of my acquaintance invest a full measure of some kind of productive activity into each day. It really scorches my butt that anyone would judge an entire ethnic group by the conduct of a few drunken panhandlers, but this is precisely what a large number of persons do. They fail to take into consideration the fact that for every street-bum in an Indian community as well as in their own community there are hundreds of decent citizens at home patching the roof or washing the kids or reading the Bible. 464 181 181

When I left Montana four years ago, Jimmy was working at a lumberyard. I was there when the man drove up and said, "Do you want to work, Jim?" Jim, who was busily trimming cedar posts, 464

54: Lancaster F-3(1958-1966)1966 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Piegan
Montana

122 didn't stay with me very well, and by supper I was starved and ate a hell of a lot of moose meat. I was quite surprised that both Jim and the Chief were enthusiastic about the mustard greens, stewed tomatoes and canned apricots that I added to the menu. I had supposed them merely tolerant of the fruits and vegetables which I have been forcing upon the table, but in future I shall no longer hesitate to act as dietitian.

122 The Chief ate marvelously, grunted away from the table, and immediately went to sleep on the sofa. Jim spun some tales until 538 eight o'clock, at which time the Chief arose refreshed and ready to tell us some stories about early and contemporary Indian politics. Most of the stories were fragmented or, at best, anecdotal, but the one story that did have any form was really a good one: this story concerned a diplomatic mission to Washington which the Chief and Plenty Treaty had undertaken in 1935. Although the narrative was [522] at times very funny—most of the laughs were at the expense of Mr. Plenty Treaty, I am afraid—I prized it less as a sample of the Chief's [537] humor than as an indication of his fantastic memory for detail and his remarkable powers as an orator (I think that the Chief's comparing his pockets to arrow quivers should be set down among the great oratorical metaphors of all time).

THE BIG CLAIM

648 The Government owed us several million dollars for some land that they had taken from us, and for many years we had been trying to collect what was owed to us. Finally we hired a lawyer in Washington, D.C. He was the same age as I, and we Indians called him Bear Head. [Bear Head would be Mr. Serven, of the law firm, Serven, Joyce, Barlow and Goodman.]

It all happened this way: One day Bob Hamilton, the official interpreter for our tribe, informed me that there was to be an important meeting down at Helena. For the previous four years we had been attempting unrelentingly but without success to present our claim before the Federal Government, and this Helena conference was the result of a communication which I had sent to [United States Senator] B. K. Wheeler. B. K. Wheeler and his [law] partner were to be at the Helena meeting along with Bear Head and another official from Washington whom we called Morning Eagle. Also to be represented at the meeting were the Flatheads, the Gros Ventres, the Assiniboines, the Sioux and the Crows. Delegates from the Piegans in-